

**Native Village of St. Michael****P.O. Box 59050 - St. Michael, Alaska 99659 Phone: (907) 923-2304/2405****Fax: (907) 923-2406**

State of Alaska  
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
Division of Program Development  
Attn: Mr. Jeff Ottesen, Director  
3132 Channel Drive  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-6984

February 13, 2004

Ref: Comments to the Proposed Consultation with Local Officials in Non-Metropolitan Areas Process

Dear Mr. Ottesen,

The Native Village of St. Michael is the federally recognized Tribal government located in St. Michael, Alaska. We are responsible for the health, safety, and welfare of our 396 Tribal Citizens.

The Native Village of St. Michael is a member of the Consortium of Tribes within Kawerak, Inc that has ended the Indian Reservation Roads program from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Our goal is to address the transportation needs of our village. We believe that the consultation process as proposed is not adequate to address consultation with local governments within Alaska.

The definitions indicate that a non-metropolitan local official means elected and appointed officials of general purpose local government, however, under the first bullet in the process, it indicates that DOT&PF will directly notify and consult with...in each organized City and Borough. There is no mention of consultation with the Tribes or the native corporations. Tribal governments also have responsibilities for addressing the transportation needs of their communities.

The interaction of the State, local, and tribal governments is often confused by land ownership issues, diverse transportation needs, and different entities responsible for delivery of the various government services. It is vital that all entities: State, tribal government, city government, village native corporation be involved in the selection of transportation projects on the STIP and in the development of the respective Statewide and Regional Long-Range Transportation Plans. We suggest that the City, Tribe, and Village Native Corporation all be considered as part of the "community", and that the State contact person develop relationships with these internal community entities.

Finally, what is not addresses is formal consultation between the Tribes, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the State. This is a process that is also required by ISTEA and TEA-21. We are aware that regulations regarding tribal consultation are yet to be drafted by the Federal Highway Administration. However, we believe that the opportunity exists for the State and Tribes in the state of Alaska to take the lead in developing a proactive government to government consultation process. We invite the state to discuss methods of

# 21

menting a government to government process at the Alaska Tribal Technical Assistance Program Symposium, scheduled for April 20 – 21, 2004 at the Anchorage Hilton.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact Julianne Baltar, Director of Kawerak's Transportation Program at 907-443-4337 or e-mail at [Julie@kawerak.org](mailto:Julie@kawerak.org).

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

*Carl Otten*  
*S.R.A. President*

*CC: Kawerak Transportation Program*  
*Julianne Baltar, Director*